



I held a news conference in March at Union Station in New Haven to announce an investigation into the taxicab industry in Connecticut. I called for this investigation after allegations were brought to my attention that the taxicab industry—particularly in New Haven—but statewide as well, is fraught with disturbing inequities regarding the treatment of drivers and that the regulation of the industry needs to be examined and approved. On my left is Michael Jefferson, the chair of the African American Affairs Commission. The other men in the photo are taxicab drivers.

## Aid For Our Community

A very significant part of my job representing the people of the 11th state Senate District is ensuring that New Haven and Hamden receive their fair share of state funding.

- ◆ I was pleased that the state made a significant commitment to remediate the Newhall Street Neighborhood in Hamden. The state allocated \$10.8 million to this project in Fiscal Year (FY) 07–08.
- ◆ Hamden received significant increases in its Education Cost Sharing (ECS) allocations in the biennial budget: the state awarded 13.3 percent more ECS money in FY 07–08 than it had in FY 06–07 and an additional 4.4 percent in FY 08–09 above the level in FY 07–08.
- ◆ New Haven receives approximately one half of its budget from the State of Connecticut.
- ◆ In ECS funding, the \$136,504,266 that New Haven received in FY 07–08 represents an \$8 million increase above the FY 06–07 funding level.
- ◆ The \$142,510,454 that New Haven will receive in FY 08–09 represents a \$6 million increase over the allocation in FY 07–08.
- ◆ Over the last three years, New Haven has received \$268,938,682 in school construction bonding funds as part of the state’s multi-year commitment to rebuild New Haven’s schools.
- ◆ In addition, a number of worthy nonprofit projects in New Haven have been funded through state bonding. These include \$1 million for the Neighborhood Music School and \$337,500 to Crossroads.

## Lowering Health Care Costs for Municipalities and Small Businesses

This legislative session we tried to tackle one of the biggest issues driving up our property taxes—health care costs for our cities and towns. The Connecticut Healthcare Partnership would allow municipalities, small businesses and nonprofits to voluntarily join the state employee health insurance plan. By expanding this large pool of insured, we would increase bargaining power and lower costs for municipalities. Not only would this pooling plan benefit property tax payers, but it would also benefit small businesses—they create the vast majority of jobs in Connecticut, but are hit the hardest when it comes to skyrocketing health care costs. Unfortunately, the governor vetoed this important bill.



Dear Neighbor:

By almost any measure, the nation is in a recession, and states across America are suffering.

Connecticut faces these uncertain times with a biennial budget that makes important investments in local schools, roads, health care, school readiness, municipal aid, criminal justice programs, and higher education.


However, state revenue forecasts continue to decline, and just as Connecticut’s families are making difficult budget decisions, so must our state government. While constrained by economic challenges during this past legislative session, the General Assembly was able to find ways to meet the needs of our state by enacting long-needed reforms in our criminal justice system, health care, consumer protection, and environmental safeguards.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*Martin Looney*

Martin Looney  
Senate Majority Leader



### Fighting the High Cost of Gasoline & Energy

We all know that the cost of fuel is sky-high—affecting how much you pay for gas and groceries. While we can’t stop fuel prices from rising, we can prevent tax increases from further driving up the cost. This June, we repealed a scheduled increase in the petroleum gross receipts tax. By blocking this tax hike, we will save you a few cents on each gallon. In addition, we have barred the oil companies from preventing franchise gas stations from offering cash discounts. We’re also taking action to help seniors and working families survive the high cost of the looming home heating oil season.

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Senate Majority Leader  
**Martin Looney**  
11TH DISTRICT



## LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

### Protecting Homeowners & Our Economy

This year, I supported comprehensive legislation designed to keep families in their homes and protect our state's economy from the national subprime mortgage crisis. Across the country, quality of life is being diminished, home values are plummeting, and families are faced with difficult choices as home foreclosure rates have skyrocketed 75 percent since 2006.

The legislation we passed created a special loan program which allows the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to purchase home loans from lenders and place eligible borrowers on affordable payment schedules for 30-year fixed-rate mortgages. We also re-initiated the state's Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program and gave CHFA the authority to purchase foreclosed homes to create affordable and supportive housing. These programs will help thousands of Connecticut families and will help prevent the mass foreclosures other states have experienced over the past year.



### Criminal Justice Reforms

The General Assembly took strong and decisive action this year on a variety of criminal justice matters. The legislature created the new crime of "home invasion," which carries a mandatory 10-year minimum prison term, and created a full-time, professional Board of Pardons and Parole. We also approved doubling and tripling prison sentences for the most violent of criminals while simultaneously giving criminal justice professionals the \$10 million needed to enhance public safety. That money will be used to prosecute repeat offenders, track sexual offenders, hire more investigators and probation officers, and increase funding for prisoner re-entry programs.



### Raising the Minimum Wage

During these tough economic times we took positive action to help working families across Connecticut. The General Assembly passed legislation to increase the state minimum hourly wage from \$7.65 to \$8.00 beginning January 1, 2009 and to \$8.25 beginning January 1, 2010. This increase will benefit nearly 65,000 low-income workers in our state and



provide them with some financial relief from the rising cost of living. While the governor vetoed this bill, the legislature successfully overrode her veto on June 23.

### Allowing Seniors to Receive Care at Home

Many seniors who require long-term care would prefer to receive that care in their own home or with a relative caregiver. For many, home care is not an option due to Medicaid reimbursement rules. A federal program called 'Money Follows the Person' allows Medicaid funds to 'follow the patient' from nursing homes to more personalized settings. The state program can currently enroll 700 seniors, but we expanded the program to accommodate up to 5,000. The state's reimbursement rate for those in the program will climb from 50 to 75 percent for each enrollee. Most seniors prefer home care when complete independence is no longer possible, and this federal/state partnership grants that wish while shoring up the state's finances.



### Toy Safety

Protecting the health and safety of the children in Connecticut will always be a major priority. We approved legislation to protect our children from the rising number of unsafe toys that may be contaminated with hazardous materials. The law bans children's toys and other products if they fail to comply with stricter limits for lead, and prohibits the sale of items marketed for children that contain asbestos. Connecticut stores must also post notices to inform consumers of recalled products and maintain reports detailing how recalled products were returned to the manufacturer or destroyed.

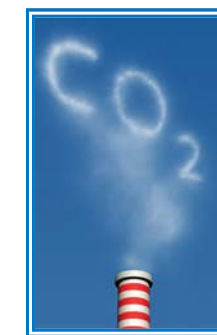


### Victory Over Broadwater

We received great news when we learned that the State of New York rejected Broadwater Energy's plan to construct a floating liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in the middle of Long Island Sound. The Long Island Sound LNG Task Force and other public officials in Connecticut and New York raised concerns that the project would harm the environment and threaten public safety, would set a poor precedent by commercializing Long Island Sound, and would not guarantee lower cost natural gas. Public officials throughout the Northeast must work together to address our region's energy challenges by bringing new, additional, and alternative energy sources on line in an environmentally sound, sustainable manner.

### Global Warming Solutions

Connecticut has once again shown that it is a leader in environmental protection with the passage of a bill that creates a timeline and targets through 2050 for our state to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. *An Act*



*Concerning Connecticut Global Warming Solutions* unanimously passed the Senate after overwhelming passage in the House. The new law requires Connecticut to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to at least 10 percent below 1990 levels by January 1, 2020, and to at least

80 percent below 2001 levels by January 1, 2050. It is estimated that in 1990, Connecticut emitted 45 million metric tons of greenhouse gases. Most of these gases are the result of burning fossil fuels for transportation, although electric generation and residential energy use also contribute heavily.

#### ETHICS REFORM

This year, Democrats made ethics reform a major priority, and I'm proud that we passed a comprehensive ethics reform bill that, in the end, passed with broad bipartisan support. In addition to protecting taxpayers from paying the pensions of corrupt officials, the law makes it illegal for a lawmaker to fail to report an offered bribe, and requires legislators to attend mandatory ethics training every four years. Above, I'm pictured speaking at a news conference on our ethics plan. Behind me, left to right, are state Senators Gayle Slossberg of Milford, Ed Meyer of Guilford and Senate President Pro Tempore Donald Williams of Brooklyn.

